

THE MELFORD RURAL DISTRICT,

IN THE ADMINISTRATIVE COUNTY OF WEST SUFFOLK.

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH FOR 1913

(Pursuant to the Regulations of the Local Government Board.)

Population (1901) 13121 ; (1911) 12791. *Area* 49850 acres. *Number of persons per acre*, 0.27.

Number of parishes, 22. *Number of Inhabited Houses*, 3173. *Number of persons per house*, 4.0.

Physical features of the District surface are flat and undulating, averaging 200 to 300 feet O.D. Geological formation, chalk with overlying beds of brick earth, drift sands and gravels, and boulder clay, the latter often 100 feet thick. Occupation of the inhabitants, chiefly agricultural.

The following vital statistics have been compiled from the monthly returns sent to me from the different Registrars in the District :—

THE BIRTHS.

The number of births registered during the year was **244**, equivalent to a birth-rate of **18.9** per 1000 of the population. The births and birth-rates in this District during the previous seven years were :—

	1906.	1907.	1908.	1909.	1910.	1911.	1912.	1913.
Births.....	272	267	260	254	242	257	222	244
Birth-rate	20.7	20.3	19.8	19.5	18.6	20.0	17.3	18.9

The birth-rate for 1913 in Rural England and Wales was 22.2.

THE DEATHS.

The number of deaths from all causes registered in the District during the year was **157**, to which have to be added the deaths of 16 persons in the Sudbury Workhouse, and of 5 persons in St. Leonard's Hospital, belonging to various parishes in the District : also of 11 residents who died elsewhere beyond the District, altogether 32. From this has to be deducted the deaths of 15 persons in the Nayland and Chilton sanatoriums, who were non-residents. Thus making the nett deaths belonging to the District **174**, equivalent to a death-rate of **13.5** per 1000 of the population. For the previous seven years they were as follows :—

	1906.	1907.	1908.	1909.	1910.	1911.	1912.	1913.
Deaths registered	168	163	178	140	137	152	179	157
Deaths belonging to the District	182	185	200	160	148	179	193	174
Death-rate	13.9	14.4	15.2	12.3	11.4	13.9	15.0	13.5

The death-rate for 1913 in Rural England and Wales was 13.1.

The following table shows the relative age mortality during the year :—

Deaths—							
Under 1	1 to 2	2 to 5	5 to 15	15 to 25	25 to 45	45 to 65	over 65
year.	years.	years.	years.	years.	years.	years.	years.
15	1	1	8	8	14	28	99

Two-thirds of the deaths registered were of persons over the age of 65, and of these 35 were over the age of 80.

INFANTILE MORTALITY.

The deaths registered of children under one year of age numbered 15 : of these 7 were under one month, due to congenital debility and premature birth. Much valuable help is given by the District and Maternity Nurses in several parishes in trying to prevent this infantile mortality, both with respect to the health of mothers and the proper care and feeding of infants.

The Infant Mortality for the previous seven years was :—

	1906.	1907.	1908.	1909.	1910.	1911.	1912.	1913.
Deaths of children under one year	21	16	17	12	15	19	14	15
Rate per 1000 of births registered	77.2	60.0	65.3	47.2	62.0	73.8	63.0	65.6

The Infant Mortality for 1913 in Rural England and Wales was 96.0.

GENERAL MORTALITY.

Among the deaths registered were cancer 13, pulmonary tuberculosis 12, organic heart disease, chiefly among old people, 30, bronchitis and pneumonia 22, accidents 3, measles 1.

NOTIFIABLE DISEASES.

1. SCARLET FEVER. No epidemic of this disease occurred during the year, nor any deaths. There were 11 cases notified, all of a mild type. Of these 4 were in the parish of Long Melford at different times of the year; 1 in each of the parishes of Nayland, Cavendish and Assington, and 4 in Stanstead among school children, towards the end of the year, necessitating the disinfection of this school during the Christmas holidays. Cottage isolation was carried out very successfully. Eucalyptus oil and disinfectants were supplied, and in due course the houses were disinfected.

2. DIPHTHERIA. Five cases were notified. Two were in a house in Lawshall where the sanitary arrangements were found to be defective, these were remedied. Two cases occurred in Cavendish, at different times, 1 being a visitor, and 1 occurred in Hartest; only in 2 cases was it necessary to supply antitoxin, as the others were of a mild type.

There is no Isolation Hospital in the District.

3. CEREBRO-SPINAL FEVER AND POLIOMYELITIS. Of this mysterious disease 3 cases were notified, all taking the form of acute poliomyelitis. Two of the cases were in the parish of Long Melford, in the opposite ends of the parish, and no connection. The first was that of a boy aged $4\frac{1}{2}$; early in July when returning from School he got wet to the skin, about twelve days after he suddenly lost the use of both legs and was feverish, he has recovered, but the left leg is weak and drags. The second case was that of a girl aged 6, an active child; one day in August felt faint and gradually became paralysed in left side, then cerebral symptoms followed and she died. The third case was in the parish of Alpheton, a healthy lad aged 16; early in October he had been overworking at haystacking, and lay down in the grass, got a chill, was for some days feverish, then followed paralysis of both legs: recovered, but right leg still affected.

In all three cases there were other children in the families, but none were affected.

PULMONARY TUBERCULOSIS.

4. This is the second year in which this disease has become compulsorily notifiable. Twenty-four cases were notified this year, spread over 11 parishes. The residence of each case was inspected and where any insanitary conditions were found to exist, they were remedied as far as possible. The cases are now also reported weekly to the County Tuberculosis Officer, and either he or his Assistant very promptly visits and examines the cases, and if found to be suitable for a few months' sanatorium treatment, and are also insured persons or dependants, they have been removed to the Bury sanatorium. Six cases have thus been dealt with. In some of the other cases domiciliary treatment was provided in the form of cod liver oil and additional foods.

The control of pulmonary tuberculosis is beginning to make progress, but some time must elapse before sufficient sanatorium provision can be made for both early and advanced cases, as well as for the uninsured.

Of the 12 deaths due to this disease registered in the District, only 2 were among those notified this year, some of the others were notified the previous year. In each case after death the rooms, bedding and clothing have been disinfected. Our two outdoor shelters have both been in use during the year.

5. OTHER FORMS OF TUBERCULOSIS. Notifications of these came into operation this year; 13 have been received, chiefly affecting cervical glands, 3 deaths were registered, 2 of which were children who died from tubercular meningitis.

NON-NOTIFIABLE DISEASES.

1. MEASLES. This disease was epidemic in three parishes. In Gt. Cornard in January, when it became necessary to close the infant school. In Cavendish and Hawkedon during May and June, when both schools were closed for a short time. Only 1 death occurred, this was in the parish of Melford where several cases occurred.

2. CHICKEN POX. A few cases were reported from several of the schools in the district, only in Leavenheath did it become epidemic among the school children.

3. WHOOPING COUGH. Towards the close of the year was very prevalent in the parishes of Gt. and Little Waldingfield. A few cases have also occurred in other parishes.

4. CANCER. The deaths from this dread disease were 13, being lower than the average, which is generally about one out of every 10 deaths. This disease is only curable, if at all, in its early stages, but is often then not recognised. Extensive researches are now being carried out and it is to be hoped that the cause and its cure may yet be discovered.

HOUSES OF THE WORKING CLASSES.

The majority of these houses throughout the District have adequate accommodation and sufficient open space, with gardens or convenient allotment ground. In several of the parishes there are however some dilapidated or overcrowded cottages which have to be occupied, because there are no other dwellings available if these should be closed. This deficiency of houses specially occurs in the following parishes, in which the addition of a few new houses with three bedrooms, are much required: Acton could do with 8; Alpheton 6; Long Melford 10; Stoke-by-Nayland 8; Bures

St. Mary 4; Lawshall 8. This approximate deficiency of houses would amount to 44. A report was made by Mr. C. H. Eyles, Local Government Board Inspector, who last summer inspected the housing accommodation throughout the District and called attention to these parishes. A commencement of supplying this want in the parish of Acton has now been arranged, and the Local Government Board have sanctioned the loan of £750, for the erection of 4 houses, and tenders for the building thereof are now being considered. This will be a Parish and not a District charge.

The following table shows the work done under Part I. of the Housing, Town Planning, &c., Act, 1909, details of which are in the Sanitary Inspector's report :

1.	Number of dwelling houses inspected under Section 17 of the Act	20
2.	" " " considered to be so dangerous or injurious to health as to be unfit for human habitation ...	15
3.	Number of representations made to the Local Authority with a view to the making of closing orders	15
4.	The number of closing orders made	8
5.	The number of dwelling houses the defects in which were remedied without making closing orders	61
6.	The number of dwelling houses which after making closing orders were put into a fit state for human habitation... ..	—
7.	The number of dwelling houses voluntarily closed	3
	" " " " " demolished	4
	" " " " " now under repair	2

The general character of the defects found to exist were in most cases structural, as defective roofs, eaves, gutters, walls, chimneys and dampness of floors, ceilings and walls. Improvement in the ventilation of 52 houses was effected by having sealed windows made to open, and in 2 cases bedrooms had windows put in, where none existed. Overcrowding was found in 17 houses; of these 12 are now abated, and the remainder are being dealt with.

During the year 11 new working class houses were erected, and 6 more are now in course of building. Supervision is exercised over the erection of all new houses.

SEWERAGE AND DRAINAGE.

The privy cesspit system, which is gradually being replaced by the pail system, is the general method of dealing with excremental refuse, which is satisfactorily disposed of on the garden or allotment ground. Sewers and connected house drains exist in the larger villages, and only are used for slop and storm water; this diluted sewage passes into open ditches, where it becomes oxidised, so that where in some cases it ultimately flows into the river, it is free from pollution. During the year 47 privies were converted into pail closets. The periodic cleaning of ditches into which sewage enters were 4 in Melford, 2 in Nayland, and 1 in Cavendish.

The scavenging scheme which was instituted in the parish of Long Melford last year, has proved to be most satisfactory, and a great help in maintaining the sanitary condition of the parish. The work comprises the weekly collection of the contents of 300 pail closets, and as required the emptying of cesspits, also the collection of all house refuse; during the year 350 loads were removed. The collections are deposited in pits in arable land outside the parish, and a useful saleable manure can result from careful mixing. The work is done by this Council, under the supervision of the Sanitary Inspector and at a cost of about £200 per annum. This is met by a special rate on the parish, as sanctioned by the Local Government Board.

WATER SUPPLY.

The water supply of the District is entirely derived from wells and springs. Many of the wells go down into the chalk formation, others get a good supply from springs in the interglacial gravels of the boulder clays.

There are 23 public wells which supply most of the villages in the District. The water from these has been at various times analysed and found to be pure, and the supply is ample. There are numerous private wells; 8 new ones were sunk this year, 3 of which were in connection with new houses, and for which certificates were granted after analysis. The samples of water taken for analysis numbered 33. Of these 7 were more or less impure, 6 of which were remedied by deepening and cleaning out organic deposits, which were the chief cause of the impurity.

The rainfall during the year was much below the average. As taken at the Sudbury Water-works registered 19.29 inches.

FOOD SUPPLY.

MILK. There are 33 dairies and cowsheds on the register, all of which have been frequently inspected and conform to the Model Regulations, 1905. Two new model cowsheds have been erected in the parishes of Boxted and Lawshall, and one in Cavendish has been repaired. All cows are grass grazed. Four of the largest cow-keepers send most of their milk to London, passing it first through strainers and refrigerators. The wholesomeness of the milk produced and sold in the District is reliable.

BAKE-HOUSES. These number 35, and were inspected, and their sanitary condition found satisfactory except in 2 cases requiring cleansing. This was done after serving notice. There are no underground bake houses

SLAUGHTER HOUSES. These number 22, and have been frequently inspected, and are kept in a good sanitary condition.

OTHER FOODS. No action has been necessary to be taken under the Food and Drugs Act.

SCHOOLS.

Inspection as to the sanitary condition of the 22 Schools in the District has been made, and they were found satisfactory. All have an available supply of good water, though not always on the premises. Each school has a convenient playground. The action taken to prevent the spread of infectious diseases is as follows—with regard to scarlet fever, the exclusion of all children from infected houses, and sometimes from infected areas; also the examination of all the children in school for any signs of desquamation, particularly those who have been lately absent. For measles, whooping cough, and chicken pox, the exclusion of the affected child, also of any younger ones in the affected family, but not necessarily the elder ones. Intimations of diseases among the children have been received from the Masters or Mistresses, and action taken when necessary. The medical inspection of school children is under the County Medical Officer of Health.

FACTORIES AND WORKSHOPS.

The factories in the district number 3, viz., in Long Melford, 1 hair weaving and 1 mat making; in Gt. Cornard, 1 mat making. The workshops number 42. Both the factories and workshops have all been inspected, and have sufficient and suitable sanitary conveniences; where persons of both sexes are employed separate accommodation is provided, in accordance with section 22 of Public Health (Amendment) Act 1890. No notices have been received from H.M. Inspector of Factories this year.

OFFENSIVE TRADES.

These consist of 2 gut works and 2 knackers' yards. Inspection has always found them free of nuisances.

LODGING HOUSES.

There are no common lodging houses in the District.

LEGAL PROCEEDINGS.

None were necessary to be taken this year.

GENERAL SANITATION.

Systematic as well as general inspections have been made throughout the district, and the house-to-house inspection is now complete in 18 parishes. Annexed is a tabular statement of the sanitary work done in each parish during the year by the Inspector of Nuisances, Mr. G. F. Rampling, who has carried out his many official duties with great diligence and success.

Tabular statistics, according to the form supplied by the Local Government Board, of the sickness, mortality, &c., within the district, are appended to the official reports.

J. SINCLAIR HOLDEN, M.D.,
Medical Officer of Health.

SANITARY INSPECTOR'S ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1913.

	Acton	Alpheton	Assington	Boxted	Bures St. Mary	St. Bartholomew	Cavendish	Chilton	Gt. Cornard	Lt. Cornard	Hartest	Hawkedon	Lawshall	Leavenheath	Melford	Nayland with Wissington	Newton	Shimpling	Somerton	Stoke-by-Nayland	Stanstead	Gt. Waldingfield	Lt. Waldingfield	TOTAL.
Complaints Received.....					1	1	1	1	1			1	1	2	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	10
Nuisances Detected.....	7	5	2	1	11	21	1	8	16	4		11	3	34	18	6	4	...	6	4	4	4	170	
Nuisances abated by Statutory Notice served.....					4	2		1				3		5	...	...	...	...	2	1			18	
Nuisances abated without Notice served.....	7	4	2	1	7	18	1	7	12	4		7	3	29	18	6	3	...	4	3	4	4	144	
Nuisances being dealt with.....		1				1			4			1			...	...	1						8	
Slaughter Houses Inspected.....			2		3	4		1		2		1		4	3					1			1	22
Dairies and Cow Sheds Inspected.....	3	1	1	1	2	2		1	1	2		1		6	4		2		3		2	1		33
Houses Newly Erected.....					3	3								1		2			1	1				11
Houses in course of Erection.....								2						3		1								6
Schools Inspected.....	1	1	1		1	2		1	1	1	1	1	1	3	1	1	1		1	1	1	1	1	22
Offensive Accumulations removed.....	1				1	2		1		1														6
Houses Disinfected.....	3			1		4		1		1		1		10	1					2		1		25
Filthy Houses Cleansed.....						1		1							1									3
Houses Overcrowded Abated.....	2	2			4	1						2		3					2	1				17
Wells (New).....					1	1		2	1			1		2										8
Wells (Cleaned out, Deepened, &c.).....	1					1		2						1		1				1				7
Samples of Water taken for Analysis.....	2				3	4		4	1			3		6		2	2	2	4					33
Privies (New).....					1	1		2	2			2		10								1		19
Privies (Repaired).....	4			1					2			1		23				1		1				33
Sewers (Repaired, Relaid, &c.)														1	1									2
Ditches Cleansed.....						1								2	2									5
Sink Pipes Disconnected.....	1				3		1			1				1	2		1							10
Drains (New).....							1	1						1	3	1			1					8
Drains (Improved).....	1				2			1	2		1			2	1		1							11
Animals improperly kept removed.....	3													1										4
Bake-houses Inspected.....			1		3	3		1	2	4		1	2	9	3	1			3	1		1		35
Workshops Inspected.....	2	1	1		3	6		2		3		2		12	3	2	1		1	1	1	1		42
Dairies and Cowsheds repaired				*1		1						*1												3
Outworkers Visited.....	4	2											9	29	15					2				61
Outworkers (Lists received).....																								3
Privies Converted into Pail Closets.....	4			1		2		2				2		33			1		1	1				47
Total number of Inspections and Visits made.....																								3200
Drains Tested with Water.....							1	1						4					1					7
Letters sent out.....																								450
House to House Inspection.....					171	88			86						44									389
Overcrowding cases being dealt with.....	1	1				1						2												5

* New Model Cowsheds.

GEO. F. RAMPLING, A.R.San.I.,

Inspector of Nuisances.

